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Defense Official Linked to Leak to Be Dismissed

WASHINGTON (UPI)—The Defense Department has notified one of its officials, a Vietnam War hero, that it intends to dismiss him on charges of disclosing information from a top-secret briefing, the Pentagon said Tuesday.

The charges against John C. F. Tillson, a director of manpower management until his reassignment to a lesser position two weeks ago, are believed to be the first leveled against a government official since a Reagan Administration crackdown on leaks was ordered earlier this year.

Tillson was one of about 25 persons who attended a secret meeting of the Defense Resources Board Jan. 7 at which officials disclosed that the Administration's arms buildup would cost \$750 billion more than the \$1.6 trillion proposed for it in the next five years.

The disclosure was leaked to the Washington Post, which printed a story the next day that infuriated Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger and his deputy, Frank C. Carlucci.

Failed Lie Detector Test

Carlucci ordered an investigation that included voluntary lie detector tests for those who had attended the meeting. Tillson's lawyer, James Heller, said his client failed the test.

Lawrence Korb, assistant secretary of defense for manpower and Tillson's superior, wrote to Tillson, charging him with disclosing classified information to unauthorized persons—including congressional aides and a former Pentagon official—and notifying him about the start of dismissal proceedings.

Heller said Tillson, an Army company commander who received two Silver Stars for valor in the Vietnam War, denied the allegations in a sworn statement and planned to appeal to the Merit Systems Protection board if he is fired.

In an unusual step, the Post reporter who wrote the story, George Wilson, wrote to Weinberger Feb. 18 saying that Tillson was not his source.

Wilson said Weinberger replied with a "cordial letter" expressing the Pentagon's views on classified briefings, "but it didn't stop the action against Tillson."